

Captain Zoheth Rich House  
Longnook and Higgins  
Hollow Road  
Truro  
Barnstable County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-758

HABS  
MASS,  
1-TRU,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CAPTAIN ZOHETH RICH HOUSE

HABS No. MA-758

Located on the north side of Longnook Road opposite the intersection of Higgins Hollow Road in Truro, Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

Building number 13-4 in Cape Cod National Seashore.

Owner: Mrs. Mary Atwood,  
Longnook Road, Truro, Massachusetts.

Use: Permanent residence.

Date of erection: ca. 1830.

This is an example of a traditional Cape Cod "house-and-a-half" of the first half of the nineteenth century, the flourishing period on the Lower Cape. It was a sea-captain's house. It is classified as a historic structure in Cape Cod National Seashore.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Although this house was not available for detailed inspection its date of construction can be safely estimated at about 1830 on stylistic grounds. The "house-and-a-half" appears most frequently in Truro from about 1820 forward. The proportions of the south front, the pitch of the roof, the arrangement of windows in the gable, and the position of the lateral door (on the west side) are all similar to the characteristics of houses known to have been built about 1830. In particular this house may be compared to the Wilson House on South Pamet Road, Truro (which is also in HABS, and in the Cape Cod National Seashore as the Ephraim Harding House - building number 17-31). The Wilson House is securely dated ca. 1829. Although the estimated date 1830 could not be corroborated by interior woodwork, which has been largely removed, or by the roof construction, which could not be seen, it is supported by known events in the life of the original owner.

The earliest known, and presumably original owner of the house was Captain Zoheth Rich (1795-1868). His was one of those unusual names common to Cape Cod remarked by Henry David Thoreau, Cape Cod (1st ed., 1864) and in the subsequent literature of the Cape. This man spelled his name Zoheth to avoid confusion with his contemporary Zoeth Rich. He has been identified in the Vital Records of Truro, Massachusetts (Boston, 1933), pp. 202, 232, 235, 250, 257, and by Miss Marion Rich of Truro. Zoheth Rich was married in 1820 to Martha Paine, who died in 1829. He married Sarah Small in 1830, and it was apparently about that date that his house was built, perhaps for his second wife. The house is indicated by the name Z. Rich on the "Map of the Counties of Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket," published by Henry F. Walling, New York, 1858.

Truro's historian Shebna Rich, Truro-Cape Cod (Boston, 1883), pp. 445-446, credits Captain Zoheth Rich with the first regularly established packet to Boston, which was the pinkie Comet. About 1830, with the financial support of friends, he built a first-class packet, the schooner Post Boy, of which he was captain. The luxurious character of this passenger vessel is described by Simeon L. Deyo, History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts (New York, 1890), p. 121.

Shebna Rich includes a description of the dry personality of Captain Zoheth, as he was called, and concludes (p. 447) with a romantic description of the captain's declining years "in his snug little house, which for nice keeping was a gem. No grass was greener, no garden cleaner, no grapes larger and no horse or cow fatter than his." However, the memory of Captain Zoheth is otherwise. Impecunious in his later years, he was virtually a charge on the town, or so it has been said, and the title to his house passed to the provision merchant Daniel E. Paine, probably for debts; although as charity the captain was allowed to live there, apparently until his death in 1868. In the Atlas of Barnstable County, Massachusetts (Boston, 1880), p. 76, the house is designated D. E. Paine.

Daniel E. Paine sold the house to Captain Sylvester B. Atwood (1847-1919), who, according to Deyo (p. 949), "followed the sea from 1859 to 1885, when he took charge of weir fishing. He was for eight years master of coasting and fishing vessels." After the death of Captain Atwood the house passed to his son Frederick A. Atwood (1873-1956), and it is now owned and occupied by the latter's widow, Mrs. Mary Atwood.

The most significant addition to the house is an ell on the north side. Probably built in the mid-nineteenth century, the ell was most likely used as a summer kitchen, after the usual custom in Truro. The interior of the original house has been largely stripped of original woodwork. Narrow oak flooring of modern date covers most of the floors. The exterior has been little altered except for replacement of window sash.

Prepared by Charles S. Dotts, National Park Service, HABS Cape Cod Survey I, 1960. Enlarged and revised by:

*Ernest Allen Connally*  
Ernest Allen Connally  
National Park Service  
Cape Cod Survey II  
Truro field office  
August, 1962

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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### PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

#### GENERAL STATEMENT

Architectural interest and merit. This structure is a one and one-half story Cape Cod "house and a half" located within the area of the proposed Cape Cod National Seashore. The interior has been modernized throughout the years, however, the original floor plan on the first floor is typical of the early Cape Cod houses found in this region.

Condition of fabric. Fair.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR.

Overall dimensions Approximately 20 x 26.

Foundations Brick, with wood sills.

Wall construction Wood frame, details unknown. A thorough study was not made of this house. The exterior is shingled, painted white.

Porches, stoops Small brick stoop at south entrance.

Chimneys One central chimney of brick.

Openings - doors 6 paneled exterior wood doors, with 4 light transoms over the south and west doors.

windows and shutters modern 2/1 double hung windows. Louvered shutters.

Roof Gabled, pitched, wood shingles.

Cornice, eaves Wood, box cornice. Narrow eaves.

Dormers, cupolas None.

Floor Plans Cape Cod "house and a half" with south entry flanked by a two window room on the east and with a one window room on the west. The original kitchen was to the rear of these rooms and has been converted

CAPTAIN ZOHETH RICH HOUSE

Architectural Information

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into a living room. The rest of the first floor was not available for inspection. The second floor has been altered and now has two bedrooms and open chamber.

Stairway One narrow and wood stairway with steep run, which is typical of this style of house. This leads off of a small hall located between the west room and the original kitchen.

Flooring Modern oak flooring (narrow) on first floor laid over original flooring apparently. Wide plank, random width, pines on second floor.

Wall and ceiling finish Plastered walls, some papered with plastered ceilings.

Doorways and doors Wood panel doors.

Trim Most of the original interior trim and paneling (as seen in similar houses) was removed at an unknown date and replaced by new wood trim.

Hardware Modern.

Lighting Electric

Heating Hot air furnace.

SITE

Orientation. This house faces south in typical early Cape Cod manner. It is located on the north side of Longnoek Road and close to the road.

Enclosures There are no fences. Shrubbery partly hides house from the road.

Outbuildings One wood frame privy, shingled, about 50 yards northwest of the house.

Walks, driveways. A gravel drive enters the yard from the road, about 20 yards west of the house.

Landscaping Fair landscaping with some shrubbery and trees. Informal.

Note: When this inspection was made, only part of the house was made accessible by the owner.

Prepared by

Charles S. Dotts

Charles S. Dotts, Architect

HABS Cape Cod Summer Project I

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Eastham Field Office

Retyped by Cape Cod Survey II, Truro field office, August, 1962.